Little Hoover Commission Hearing

Technology and Government
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The state of California faces a unique opportunity to structure government to address the needs of the future and capture the promise of technology, by better aligning IT to the state's core business and mission.

By embracing the long term strategic importance of technology and the implications of transformational government enabled through technology, the state of California will be positioned well for the future. California is recognized around the world as an innovator – there is an opportunity to define a path to excellence in the delivery of services to citizens and business; better integrate government programs; as well as the delivery of services internal to state operations.

Here are a few core issues to consider as California's state government assesses its strategy for moving forward.

The Role of Technology

Technology is very often misunderstood – and is seen by many as an expensive 'black box', with little measurable value. Historically, technology meant 'data processing' and was directly related to large financial systems. However, it is important to understand the pervasive nature of technology in the public sector today. From voice and data networks, to citizen-facing internet applications, to desktop productivity tools and customer service call centers - technology affects and enables nearly every aspect of government operations.

In addition, it is fair to say that technology professionals and industry have historically oversold the promise of technology. A perception of technology as a magic bullet has undermined the hard work required to realize the potential offered by the unique tools at our disposal.

Simply put, technology is a tool – nothing more. However, in the right hands, like a chisel in the hands of a master artisan, technology becomes an extremely powerful enabler. In the context of government, and particularly this moment in time for the State of California, there is an opportunity to recognize transformational opportunities which can improve operations and collaboration among government agencies, and perhaps more importantly, can fundamentally change the relationship and level of service for the citizens it serves.

Technology Governance

The single most important task -- with the greatest implications for long-term success -- is getting technology governance right.   The good news is we can draw upon best practices from around the United States and the world – and from both the public sector and private. California is not alone in addressing the challenges of effective technology investment and utilization.

In drawing upon best practices from around the US and the world, here are few areas technology officials in California may consider.

Oversight authority
Strong and clear oversight authority provides:
- consistent, predictable, transparent procurement
- supportive IT stakeholders
- strategic alignment across historical jurisdictional boundaries
- accountability

Service Model
IT organizations based on principles of service provide:
- competitive technology investment
- coordination, transparency and predictability
- adaptive resource management
- strategic alignment with business objectives

Executive Sponsorship
Strong executive sponsorship enables:
- formal and informal authority
- consistent expectations for results
- common understanding of strategic vision
- clear expectations for the role of the CIO(s)

Guiding Principles

Defining overarching guiding principles for technology is an important part of realizing and measuring success. The task at hand will not be accomplished over night, and it is important to have long term objectives. Some suggested examples:

Sustainability
Technology investment and operations should provide repeatable, adaptable and predictable results over time as technology changes and business processes evolve. Technology investment is not a sprint, it's a marathon. Technology investment includes not only the acquisition cost, but the cost to integrate, operate and maintain through the entire lifecycle. Does the

environment allow and encourage technology to span election cycles, jurisdictional boundaries, and organizational silos?

Innovation

The promise of technology is not the technology itself – the potential is realized in understanding how technology as a tool allows us to operate differently. Does the environment encourage and reward continuous improvement, original thinking, and change for the better?

Leadership

A fundamental requirement driven by the nature of technology is bold leadership. Technology continues to blur jurisdictional boundaries which, particularly in government, have become institutionalized. Does the environment promote and develop individuals and organizations that demonstrate transformational vision?

The State Librarian Emeritus of California, Kevin Starr, in his paper titled ***"California: the Dream and the Challenge in the Twenty-first Century"*** points out the significance of the issue at hand:

> "....With a population approaching thirty-five million and a trillion dollar-plus economy in over-drive, California has moved into the front ranks of global commonwealths as an international force in trade and commerce, higher education, scientific research, entertainment, technology, and virtually every other aspect of human creativity...."

> "Technology
> Central as well to the California formula was technology."

California State government is at a crossroads – and clearly has a unique opportunity to develop and embrace a vision for the role of technology in government that offers a leadership vision for the country and the world.